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MORE RANGE AND FEWER ELK
TO SOLVE JACKSON HOLE PROBLEM

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The Jackson Hole elk herd should be limited to about 20,000 animals. Any excess should be disposed of by hunting, by transplanting to other desirable areas, or, if necessary, by regulated killing. The elk range should be enlarged enough to provide year round feed for the herd. These are the recommendations of specialists of the U. S. Biological Survey for solving the elk problem in Jackson Hole, Wyoming.

Deprived of most of its former range, the valuable Jackson Hole elk herd has annually caused Federal and State officials grave concern. In recent years feed shortage on the range has necessitated the feeding of hay to the animals at the Federal Elk Refuge, and during their migrations the elk have provoked neighboring ranchers by trespassing on private lands.

Faced with this two-fold problem, the Federal naturalists have prescribed (1) an increase in the refuge area for the elk, and (2) stabilizing the elk population. The Survey is now working toward both these objectives.

Permanent solution of the elk problem in Jackson Hole, say the Survey biologists, depends on the restoration and protection of the natural range. The elk, they explain, need a natural winter range in order to be free from the yearly danger of starvation and deterioration, which occurs wherever wild animals are forced to depend on artificial food.

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Immediate difficulties, they believe, would be met if the elk could use some 12,000 to 15,000 acres of land now privately owned between the present Elk Refuge on the south and the Gros Ventre and Snake Rivers to the north, and if livestock grazing could be eliminated from the area. The purchase of private lands, together with the setting aside of some publicly owned land within the area, will probably end the unsatisfactory conditions that go along with winter feeding.

Elk To Remain Animals of the Wild

This remnant of our elk, the naturalists emphasize, should not be required to forage for subsistence among farm crops. As a result of the planned extension of the refuge, the herd, it is hoped, will again somewhat resemble that of the pioneer days. And under such a situation, Jackson Hole should present an inspiring spectacle of wildlife, with the elk inhabiting its native range as free and untrammelled as on the day the first white man invaded the wilderness.

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